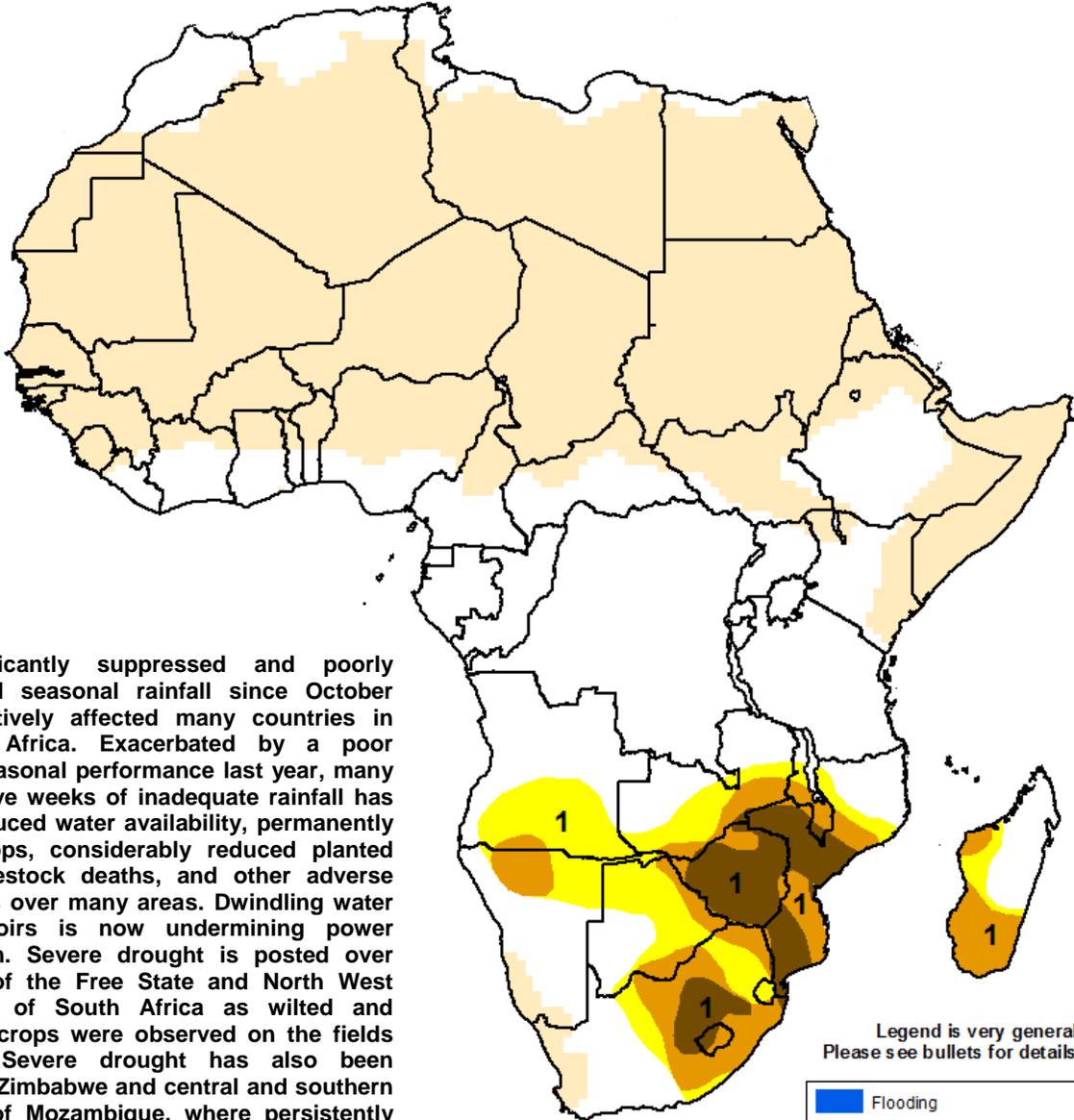




Climate Prediction Center's Africa Hazards Outlook February 25 – March 02, 2016

- An erratic rainfall distribution and extremely poor rain totals since the start of the season has led to widespread loss of crops and other adverse conditions affecting millions of people.
- Rapidly increasing moisture deficits since the start of 2016 in southern Madagascar have led to deteriorating conditions on the ground and the onset of drought.



1) Significantly suppressed and poorly distributed seasonal rainfall since October has negatively affected many countries in southern Africa. Exacerbated by a poor rainfall seasonal performance last year, many consecutive weeks of inadequate rainfall has led to reduced water availability, permanently wilted crops, considerably reduced planted areas, livestock deaths, and other adverse conditions over many areas. Dwindling water in reservoirs is now undermining power production. Severe drought is posted over portions of the Free State and North West Provinces of South Africa as wilted and damaged crops were observed on the fields recently. Severe drought has also been posted in Zimbabwe and central and southern portions of Mozambique, where persistently large rainfall deficits have already destroyed more than 40% of crops. Rapidly strengthened moisture deficits have resulted in conditions consistent with drought across southern Madagascar and northern Namibia.

Legend is very general.
Please see bullets for details.

	Flooding
	Abnormal Dryness
	Drought
	Severe Drought
	Tropical Cyclone
	Potential Locust Outbreak
	Heavy Snow
	Abnormal Cold
	Abnormal Heat
	Seasonally Dry

The driest conditions in decades continue to impact large and expanding portions of the region.

During the last observation period, the majority of the southern African region was under the influence of suppressed rainfall. Below-average rains were observed in many parts of Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Zambia, and Madagascar. According to satellite estimates, portions of Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Botswana did not record any rain once again (Figure 1). According to satellite estimates, the largest weekly rainfall accumulations (>150mm) were registered in localized areas of northern Madagascar. Significantly lighter, below-average rainfall occurred to the south. Moderate rainfall was received across western Botswana, the Caprivi Strip region, and Angola. Lesotho and bordering provinces of South Africa received moderate to heavy rains between 50-75mm.

The largest precipitation deficits remain concentrated over southern Zambia, Mozambique, southern Malawi, and Zimbabwe. Many areas within these countries are experiencing well less than half of their normal rainfall since January 1st. As a result, the season ranks among the worst over the last 30 years for many areas. Figure 2 shows the large areas where this season currently ranks among the bottom 10%, or even 3%, of driest seasons over the climatology. The coverage area of the bottom 10th percentile in Zimbabwe has expanded substantially, even since last week. The harshness of these dry conditions has severely affected cropping activities. In southern Angola and northern Namibia, moisture deficits continue to increase reaching criteria consistent with drought.

Similar rapidly increasing moisture deficits in southern Madagascar have already affected many hundreds of thousands of people with drought conditions. Many portions of southern Madagascar are now observed to be among the driest 10% of seasons. These areas of Madagascar have registered less than 50% of normal rainfall since the start of the calendar year, and the negative impacts are beginning to manifest themselves in the vegie indices. Furthermore, the erratic distribution in rainfall since the beginning of the season has resulted in wilted and damaged maize crops over large portions of South Africa, in particular Free State and North West Provinces. Continuing infrequent and low rainfall accumulations are exacerbating the situation.

During the next outlook period, models suggest that more normal coverage of rainfall will occur. Many of the driest areas of southeastern Africa could see more seasonable rain totals in the next week. The highest totals should remain over portions of Malawi, Mozambique, and expand over much of Madagascar (Figure 3). Heavy, but beneficial rainfall totals greater than 100mm may occur in Angola and northern Namibia, as well.

As we approach March, attention must be paid to the greater Horn of Africa once again. Light scattered shower activity thus far in February across Ethiopia looks to give way to widespread moderate early season rainfall. Rains could spread into Somalia and Eritrea. Rains will likely remain light for portions of Uganda which are currently registering moisture deficits.

Note: The hazards outlook map on page 1 is based on current weather/climate information and short and medium range weather forecasts (up to 1 week). It assesses their potential impact on crop and pasture conditions. Shaded polygons are added in areas where anomalous conditions have been observed. The boundaries of these polygons are only approximate at this continental scale. This product does not reflect long range seasonal climate forecasts or indicate current or projected food security conditions.

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